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REQUIREMENTS FOR ADMISSION IN ENGLISH.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes,

Sirs:—In the Mod. Lang. Notes for January, I am glad to notice some interesting comments by Professor Brown of Vanderbilt University, on the "Requirements for Admission in English." The comments are timely, because Committees appointed by the New England Commission of Colleges, the Association of Colleges for the Middle States and Maryland, the North Central Association, and the Southern Association, are soon to meet in conference to consult concerning the working of the plan thus far, and to consider the choice of books for 1901 and thereafter. A word or two, therefore, from a member of the original Conference which framed the requirement may be proper.

It is true that the books for 1898 differ largely from those for 1897 and the preceding years. This is due to the fact that the books for 1898 and subsequent years were the only ones chosen by the Conference. A system had been in use for some years in New England, and the Conference agreed that

"in order not to distnrb existing courses in the preparatory schools the books set in the requirements under the years 1895, 1896, and 1897 should be identical with those in the exis ting New England list."

Under this ruling, which I am sure all the members of the Conference think to have been on the whole a wise one, Defoe's *History of the Plague in London* descended to be a plague to a Conference in no wise responsible for its selection. For the books subsequent to 1897, the Conference undertook responsibility. In the selections certain distinct periods and types were to be represented; historical sequence was to be considered; and prose and poetry were to have about equal representation. It was also intended to choose one work for each successive year of preparation which should present at least as much difficulty, and offer at least as much opportunity, as the Caesar, Cicero, Ovid, Vergil, Xenophon or Homer required in the Latin or Greek examinations.

So much for the work already done. For the work now in hand the Committees very much desire constructive suggestions. It will be a great assistance if every English Professor interested will send a list of ten books for reading, and four books for study, based upon some definite plan of a four years' preparatory course, and defended by a few words of statement of fitness. These lists may be sent to Professor Baskervill of Vanderbilt University, Professor Scott of Michigan University, Professor Cook of Yale, or to myself. It is perhaps too much to ask busy men to give, in addition, detailed criticism and advice as to the working of the system thus far. But I am sure that the Committees will welcome any assistance in the settlement of the problems involved, and will give most careful consideration to every suggestion.

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SPIELEN WITH THE GENITIVE.

To the Editors of Mod. Lang. Notes,

Sirs:—In the December No. (Vol. xi, 1896), of Mod. Lang. Notes, there appeared a note by Mr. Edward Meyer on the phrase *Versteckens spielen.* Prof. Thomas is first mentioned as considering *Versteckens* (*Practical Grammar*, p. 200) "a genitive difficult to classify." Mr. Meyer tells us that *Versteckens* is not a genitive, but "merely a verb and its object," that is, *Verstecken uns* is "contracted into *Versteckens.*"

A word on *spielen* will show Prof. Thomas to be correct in calling *Versteckens* a genitive. It might be classified as a partitive genitive.—The use of *spielen* with the genitive is of Indogermanic origin. Examples may be found in Sanscrit, Slavic and Germanic. In the first of these two branches of languages, the genitive represents *that for which* one plays and in the two latter, *that which* one plays. (Cf. Baldes, *Der Genitiv bei Verbis im Ahd.* Strassburg: 1882.) In German *spielen* is only one of many verbs, which as a rule governed the genitive in O.H.G. and M.H.G., but which in Mn. G. appear with the accusative or prepositional phrases. The yielding of the genitive to other forms may be seen even in O.H.G. To illustrate: twelve verbs which govern the genitive in Otfrid are used with the accusative

or prepositional phrases in Notker. M.H.G. remains somewhat conservative. The greatest change, as Vernaleken implies (*Deutsche Syntax*, Vol. ii, p. 23), occurs after the sixteenth century.

In German, *spielen* is used with the genitive or the accusative. I have been able to find no examples of *spielen* with the genitive in the other Germanic languages. In O.H.G. and M.H.G. the genitive appears the more frequently; in N.H.G., the accusative. In fact, N.H.G. always uses the accusative if, as Grimm says (*Grammatik*, iv, 673), we except the games of children; for example, *kämmerchens, versteckens, fanges, etc., spielen.* One example from O.H.G. and one from M.H.G. will suffice.

Notker, ed. Piper, Vol. i, 60.24: *tisses spiles spilon ih* (*ludum ludimus*). Neidhart, 19.26: *Spil wir kint balles.*

Other examples may be found: Grimm, *Grammatik*, iv, 673; Baldes (see above); Graff vi, 331; Lexer, 1094; Vernalken, ii 45.*

ERNEST IRVING ANTRIM.
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THE ANGLO-SAXON geðæf.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—In addition to the numerous examples from *Boethius* containing some form of *gepafa beon* in the sense of *to acknowledge, confess*,[1] the following from Alfred's *Blooms*[2] may be noted:

þonne sceal ic beo þæs geðafa 342, 44. *Ic eom gepafa þæs þe þu me segst* (Lat.[3] *Fateor, ita est*) 343, 15. *Hu ne were þu ær geðafa þæt ic nan wiht ne lufode*, etc. 345, 34. *Gif ðu hyt ongitten hæbbe, ne hel hyt me, ac beo hys geðafa . . . . and beo geðafa þæt þu æart hys þeowa . . . . Ða cwæð ic, þæs ic æom geðafa*, etc. 349, 7, 12, 42. *ymbe hwæt twæost þu nu? Hu nu ne were ðu ær geðafa, þæt god were æce and ælmihtih*, etc., 350, 27.

These examples would all seem to confirm Blackburn's rendering of *ond hira geðæf bion* (Sweet's *Cura Past.*, p. 23, l. 22.).

W. H. HULME.
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* Other communications criticizing Mr. Meyer's explanation of the phrase have been received from Professor H. C. G. Brandt and Dr. F. G. G. Schmidt. ED.

1 Cf. Prof. Blackburn's Note, MOD. LANG. NOTES for Feb., 1896.

2 Cf. *Engl. Stud.* xviii, 332 ff.

3 Augustine, *Soliloq.* Lib. I, Cap. ix, 16.

WILLIE-WAUGHT.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—In the sample pages of a new manual of English literature, now lying before us, we read

"And we'll tak a right guid *willie-waught*,"

as we have read it fifty times before, and the usual note "*willie-waught*, hearty draught"; one editor copying text and note from another, like sheep jumping over a hedge.

It takes but a very moderate acquaintance with the Scottish tongue to know that there is no such word as *willie-waught*, which nobody ever saw, except in this line. A *waught*, or *waucht*, for a draught, is common enough, and so is *gude-willie*, for hearty, cordial. Some printer—perhaps that of Johnson's *Museum* in which the poem first appeared—misplaced a hyphen, and the world is pestered with *willie-waught* for a hundred years. Jamieson, in his *Scot. Dict.* prints the line correctly. Mr. Douglas, the editor of the excellent Edinburgh (1877) edition of Burns, very justly says: "*Willie-waught* is nonsense; but *gude-willie* or *ill-willie* is a compound adjective in every-day use." Can nobody take this ugly spook of a word to a cross-roads and drive a stake through it?

WM. HAND BROWNE.
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THE AFRICAN gnu.

TO THE EDITORS OF MOD. LANG. NOTES.

SIRS:—In a recent inquiry concerning the Hottentots of S. Africa, the question came to my mind whether it might be possible to refer the nomen *gnu* 'an african antelopine species,' to the aryan *gō*. This word exists as *go, gu, gaus, gava* in Sanskrit and obtains in some form in the insular Indian dialects.

I assume an intercourse between the Aryan group and the red or yellowish-brown races of S. Africa, but give neither time nor space relationship. There are many things, particularly the family cult and the gender distinction, that may be referred to an Aryan stimulus. S. African prefers ū to ō; cf. S. African *zebu* to E. Indian *zobo*. The peculiar sound system of the Hottentots would give to cons. *g* a sound whose phonetic value would be approximately *gn*.

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